

City of Washington  
District of Columbia

American Institute of Physics  
Case 5-CA-29366

AFFIDAVIT

I, Jeff Schmidt, being first duly sworn upon my oath, hereby state as follows:

I have been given assurances by an agent of the National Labor Relations Board that this affidavit will be considered confidential by the United States Government and will not be disclosed unless it becomes necessary for the government to produce the affidavit in connection with a formal proceeding.

1 I reside at 3003 Van Ness Street, NW, W406, Washington, DC 20008. My telephone number  
2 is (202) 537-3645. I am currently unemployed.

3 Beginning in March 1981, I was employed as an editor by Physics Today (PT) magazine, a  
4 division of the American Institute of Physics (AIP). I was discharged on May 31, 2000. I was  
5 working two-thirds time with full benefits when I was discharged. The official workweek was 37.5  
6 hours, and I worked 25 hours. I was paid two-thirds of my full-time salary.

7 My immediate supervisor was Stephen G. Benka, Editor of Physics Today magazine. Benka's  
8 boss is Randolph A. Nanna, Publisher of Physics Today. (Nanna's predecessor, Charles Harris, was  
9 fired about March 2, 1999.) Nanna's boss is James H. Stith, Director of Physics Programs for AIP.  
10 Stith's boss is Marc Brodsky, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the American  
11 Institute of Physics. The American Institute of Physics has approximately 500 employees. Theresa C.  
12 Braun is Director of Human Resources at AIP. Braun and Stith are on AIP's management committee.

13 On May 31, 2000, Benka and Nanna spoke to me while I was in the office of co-worker Judy  
14 Barker. They told me that Braun wanted to meet with us. I asked when. They said now. I said that  
15 Brodsky was conducting a meeting in five minutes time. (The meeting was to be held on the first  
16 floor.) They said that's all right. I said that I wanted to go to my office first. (I was holding copies of  
17 articles that I had just finished editing.) They followed me to my office and then escorted me to the  
18 elevator. We took the elevator from the third floor to the second floor. Historian Spencer Weart,  
19 Director of the American Institute of Physics Center for History of Physics, happened to be on the

1 elevator. Nanna, Benka, and I went to the personnel office. Theresa Braun joined us in a small  
2 conference room, and all four of us sat down.

3 Braun said that Benka would explain why we were present. Benka said, we see in your own  
4 introduction to your own book that you have stolen from the magazine. Therefore, you can no longer  
5 be employed by Physics Today. Benka said your employment is terminated, now. I objected. I said  
6 that I have not stolen from the magazine. I said this sounds like a pretext. Neither Benka nor any  
7 other manager had ever asked me a single question about the book or even mentioned it to me. I said I  
8 am two months ahead in my work. Benka said that we are not here to answer questions. They would  
9 not respond to anything I said. Braun said we are not going to talk about this today. Braun said that I  
10 would not be allowed to go back to my office. She also said that I would not be allowed to come back  
11 into the building at any time for any reason. I protested. She said we have sound reasons for  
12 everything we do. Then they called in a personnel office employee named Jonathan Goodwin and sent  
13 him to my office to fetch my coat. Thereafter, Braun and Goodwin escorted me to the first-floor front  
14 door.

15 I walked to the College Park Metro station and phoned several of my co-workers at PT and  
16 AIP, including Elliot Plotkin, Michael Neuschatz, and Spencer Weart. I left voice-mail messages,  
17 informing them that I had been fired. I reached co-worker Marian Smith. While talking to her, I could  
18 hear Benka in the background. She told me that he was calling everybody to another meeting. Many  
19 of my co-workers informed me that my discharge was the sole topic of that meeting. My co-workers  
20 informed me that at the meeting Benka said that I had been fired for cause, that he refused to give any  
21 details, and that he hoped to obtain permission from Brodsky to say more later in the day. I was  
22 informed that Benka, Nanna, and Stith were present at that meeting. I was further informed by co-  
23 workers that later that day, Benka told employees that I was fired for doing something other than what  
24 I was being paid to do. According to Irwin Goodwin, a longtime co-worker who was Physics Today's  
25 Washington correspondent at the time, management fired me "with glee" and told people about it as a  
26 happy occurrence.

27 My book was published in April 2000. I never told the company that I was writing a book.  
28 The introduction to my book begins as follows:

1  
2           This book is stolen. Written in part on stolen time, that is. I felt I  
3 had no choice but to do it that way. Like millions of others who work for a  
4 living, I was giving most of my prime time to my employer. My job simply  
5 didn't leave me enough energy for a major project of my own, and no one  
6 was about to hire me to pursue my own vision, especially given my  
7 irreverent attitude toward employers. I was working in New York City as  
8 an editor at a glossy science magazine, but my job, like most professional  
9 jobs, was not intellectually challenging and allowed only the most  
10 constrained creativity. I knew that if I were not contending with real  
11 intellectual challenges and exercising real creativity -- and if I were not  
12 doing anything to shape the world according to my own ideals -- life would  
13 be unsatisfying, not to mention stressful and unexciting. The thought of just  
14 accepting my situation seemed insane. So I began spending some office  
15 time on my own work, dumped my TV to re-appropriate some of my time at  
16 home, and wrote this book. Not coincidentally, it is about professionals,  
17 their role in society, and the hidden battle over personal identity that rages in  
18 professional education and employment.

19           The predicament I was in will sound painfully familiar to many  
20 professionals. Indeed, generally speaking, professionals are not happy  
21 campers. After years of worshipping work, many seemingly successful  
22 professionals are disheartened and burned-out, not because of their 70-hour  
23 workweeks, but because their salaries are all they have to show for their life-  
24 consuming efforts. They long for psychic rewards, but their employers'  
25 emphasis on control and the bottom line is giving them only increased  
26 workloads, closer scrutiny by management and unprecedented anxiety about  
27 job security. In this way the cold reality of employer priorities has led to  
28 personal crises for many of this country's 21 million professionals.

29  
30           The company has a one-hour unpaid lunch period and two fifteen-minute paid breaks, for a  
31 total of one-half hour of paid break time per day. The company imposed no restrictions on how  
32 employees used their break time. The PT division allows employees to take the breaks whenever they  
33 want and for as long as they want. However, I had a reputation for getting my work done and for  
34 limiting my use of social breaks. Sometimes I spent my break time and lunch time doing work for the  
35 magazine. Sometimes I spent some of my break time and lunch time working on my book. I thought  
36 about the book, jotted down notes, and used the computer in my office in a manner consistent with the  
37 company's computer use policy. Working on the book during paid break time felt like stealing time  
38 and gave me the idea for the introduction. I phrased the introduction as a nod to Abbie Hoffman's  
39 1971 classic, *Steal This Book*. Management never mentioned my use of the computer in my office

1 when they told me the reason for my discharge. I never used any work time except break time and  
2 lunch time to work on my book. I always gave company work priority, even over break time and  
3 lunch time and weekends, and for 19 years I had the best record of meeting deadlines of any staff  
4 member. The production department kept and has records.

5 In my view, the company seized upon the introduction of my book as a pretext to fire me in  
6 retaliation for the group activity and workplace activism and advocacy that I engaged in. In recent  
7 years, I engaged in workplace activism as detailed in part below. During that time, management  
8 retaliated against me because of my workplace activism with co-workers. I detail some of these events  
9 below.

10 On October 4, 1996, on behalf of staff members who had been pushing for pay equity at PT, I  
11 told the PT advisory committee, at their annual meeting, that the large salary differentials among the  
12 staff are not only unfair, but divisive and bad for morale and productivity. I also raised this issue at  
13 various staff meetings. On October 22 and October 23, 1996, I and co-workers Jean Kumagai, Toni  
14 Feder, and Paul Elliott sent messages to management in support of the hiring of additional staff and in  
15 support of staff participation in the hiring process. We requested that these issues be put on the agenda  
16 for the staff meeting scheduled for October 24, 1996. On November 15, 1996, the PT advisory  
17 committee issued a report that was critical of the working conditions at the magazine, based on staff  
18 grievances brought to the committee's attention by me and co-workers at the committee's October 4,  
19 1996 meeting. On November 15, 1996, I and co-workers gave PT's managers and staff a ten-point list  
20 of changes that we wanted to be made at the PT workplace. We presented our requests in the form of  
21 a proposed agenda for a two-day retreat scheduled for November 19-20, 1996. That agenda included  
22 job security, staff involvement in workplace dispute resolution, better distribution of job tasks, a  
23 change in hiring practices to increase diversity of the staff, and the provision of working conditions  
24 appropriate for professionals.

25 On September 18, 1997, a majority of the PT staff, led by me and others, gave managers and  
26 staff a list of concerns centered around a demand for working conditions that were appropriate for  
27 professionals. We presented our concerns as a request for agenda time at a one-day retreat scheduled  
28 for September 25, 1997. On September 22, 1997, on behalf of six staff members, I asked then PT

1 publisher, Charles Harris, to include the support staff in the September 25, 1997 retreat. On  
2 September 25, 1997, near the beginning of the staff retreat, I asked if staff members could ask  
3 questions. Harris said no. I said that staff members should be allowed to ask questions. Harris angrily  
4 shouted no, that's an order. A few days after the retreat, Harris told me that he thought that my request  
5 for the right to ask questions was a disguised attempt to raise issues of staff concern. Thereafter,  
6 management began subjecting my work to increased scrutiny.

7 On October 1, 1997, Harris and Benka gave me a written "gag order." Harris expressed his  
8 opinion that my "interruption" at the retreat was "destructive and counterproductive" and that  
9 continuation of such behavior in the office or at any work-related activity will not tolerated. The  
10 notice stated that it was to be treated as confidential, meaning that I could not discuss it with co-  
11 workers. Shortly thereafter, co-worker Graham Collins was instructed by management not to criticize  
12 Benka or Harris during staff meetings. On October 17, 1997, I and co-workers, in a written grievance  
13 presented to the PT advisory committee at its annual meeting, requested relief from the increasingly  
14 repressive work environment at the magazine. The grievance describes how Graham Collins and I had  
15 been warned about speaking up regarding workplace problems. The grievance states, "Both Jeff and  
16 Graham have been outspoken about problems that many of us see at the magazine. We feel that the  
17 [gag orders on them] contribute to a repressive atmosphere at the magazine and restrict all of us. We  
18 hope the advisory committee will do whatever it can to get these warnings retracted, and to remind the  
19 PT managers that repression is counterproductive. Such steps would go a long way toward  
20 diminishing the fear that staff members now associate with trying to openly address problems at the  
21 magazine." In addition to this written presentation, I and my co-workers also orally presented our  
22 collective grievances to the committee during private individual meetings.

23 On December 2, 1997, Harris, under pressure from the PT staff, rescinded the gag orders on  
24 me and Collins. On January 22, 1998, I asked Harris not to reduce support-staff help and referenced  
25 the discussions at prior staff meetings. Harris indicated that he was not inclined to give the request  
26 much consideration because of my workplace activity and because, he said, I tried to get him fired.

27 On January 28, 1998, after working hours, Benka broke up two private conversations between  
28 me and co-worker Toni Feder. After breaking up the second conversation, Benka told us that he was

1 forbidding all private conversations between staff members at work because of the workplace activity  
2 that had taken place during the last year; he said that all conversations between staff members must be  
3 open to monitoring by management. Shortly after January 28, 1998, co-worker Paul Elliott  
4 complained to Harris about the ban on private conversations between staff members. Elliott reported  
5 to me that Harris told him that Harris was 100 percent sure that the activity that Benka broke up  
6 between me and Feder involved my organizing against management's effort to shift clerical work from  
7 the secretarial staff to the editors.

8 On March 20, 1998, Brodsky told me that some of my workplace activities were  
9 "counterproductive." On March 24, 1998, I met with Benka to discuss my 1998 performance  
10 review. Benka condemned my workplace activities with co-workers and focused in particular on  
11 my leading role in such group activities around the November 1996 retreat, where staff members  
12 had raised issues of job security and working conditions, even though that activity occurred before  
13 the period covered by my review. Benka said that I had spent a lot of time in "disruptive efforts,"  
14 that I had been formally reprimanded during this period (an apparent reference to the gag order), and  
15 although that (the gag order) had been buried, it certainly had an effect on the office. Benka referred  
16 to the group of staff members with whom I had worked to address workplace issues as "your cabal."  
17 Benka reduced my performance rating from "Exceeds Job Requirements" to "Meets Job  
18 Requirements." In addition, Benka increased my work load from 14 feature articles per year to 18  
19 feature articles per year, a 28 percent increase.

20 On April 27, 1998, I wrote Braun and Stith to appeal my 1998 performance review. I  
21 circulated my appeal to 12 co-workers. On June 25, 1998, I met with Stith concerning my 1998  
22 performance review. Stith made it clear to me that my workplace activity, apart from my job  
23 assignments, played a central role in my critical review and lowered job performance rating. I asked  
24 Stith to repeal the ban on private conversations in the workplace. He said that he knew about it and  
25 would look into it, but he never repealed the ban. On July 16, 1998, I e-mailed a dozen co-workers  
26 concerning Stith's refusal to make any corrections to my 1998 performance review.

27 From mid-December 1998 to mid-June 1999, I took a six-month unpaid leave of absence.  
28 After I returned to work, my co-worker Paul Elliott told me that while I was away, management

1 conducted a "smear campaign" against me, with Harris and Benka referring to my absence in positive  
2 terms, and Harris more than once referring to me as a "troublemaker." Upon my return from unpaid  
3 leave in mid-June 1999, Benka harshly criticized me for the first time for showing my 1998  
4 performance review appeal to my co-workers. My performance review appeal reviewed workplace  
5 activities that I and my co-workers had engaged in. I circulated this appeal back in April 1998, about  
6 14 months earlier. Benka told me in mid-June 1999 that I was lucky that I still had my job after doing  
7 that (circulating that document).

8 In June 1999, in response to the sharp increase in my workload imposed by management, I  
9 asked PT management to allow me to perform two-thirds work for two-thirds pay. I felt that  
10 management had imposed a workload requirement that I was not sure that I could meet and that the  
11 increased workload was a punitive measure imposed because of my workplace activities. On August  
12 9, 1999, my request was approved, effective September 20, 1999. My pay was reduced by one-third,  
13 but my work was not reduced proportionately because it had already been raised by 28 percent. On  
14 August 17, 1999, I received an inaccurate and punitive 1999 performance review covering the period  
15 from February 1998 to August 1999. The review states, inter alia, "During this review period, Jeff  
16 repeatedly engaged in disruptive and counterproductive behavior, damaging a collegial office climate  
17 and thereby undermining the editorial effort of Physics Today. Such behavior is unacceptable." An  
18 example of such behavior, according to the review, was showing my co-workers my 1998 performance  
19 review appeal, a document that details workplace issues and group activities at Physics Today, as  
20 described above. The 1999 performance review punished me for this communication with my co-  
21 workers about workplace issues and stated that such communication serves to undermine the staff's  
22 respect for management.

23 On August 17-19, 1999, I held discussions with a number of co-workers to organize support  
24 for the right of employees to discuss performance reviews and other workplace issues with each other  
25 and to discuss punitive actions by management against employees. On August 19, 1999, I met with  
26 Benka to discuss my 1999 performance review. Benka expressed anger about my communications  
27 with co-workers about workplace issues. Benka highlighted my April 1998 communications with co-  
28 workers about workplace issues as set forth in the appeal that I circulated among co-workers. Benka

1 told me to pay very close attention to my influence with co-workers. He said that circulating my  
2 response to the performance review in 1998 was extremely destructive because it addressed workplace  
3 issues that had nothing to do with the review. He said that he did not want to see anything of this sort  
4 again.

5 Benka also admonished me for talking to co-workers about the 1999 performance review,  
6 which Benka wanted to keep secret. Benka demanded that I tell him which co-workers I had spoken  
7 with about issues raised in my 1999 performance review. I told him that I would first have to ask them  
8 for permission to release their names. Later that day (August 19, 1999), Benka reiterated by e-mail, his  
9 demand that I tell him the names of the staff members with whom I had discussed my 1999  
10 performance review. Benka told me that sharing performance reviews with co-workers was out of line  
11 with AIP procedures. Shortly after my August 19, 1999 meeting with Benka, I met with co-workers to  
12 decide how to respond to Benka's demands that I release their names. We also discussed how to  
13 protect our right to communicate privately about workplace issues such as performance reviews and  
14 punitive treatment by management. The performance reviews were a catalyst for discussing larger  
15 workplace issues.

16 On August 26, 1999, I informed Benka that my co-workers and I had decided not to reveal any  
17 names or any information that would identify which staff members are involved in private discussions  
18 about workplace issues. During this conversation, Benka reiterated his opposition to private  
19 conversations between staff members about workplace issues. He told me that everything to do with  
20 the job is his "domain" and that there should be no "privacy from me."

21 On September 17, 1999, the AIP and I entered an agreement that specified the amount of work  
22 that I would perform and the amount that I would be paid for such work. On November 10, 1999, I  
23 requested that my excess vacation time be carried over to 2000. A week later, co-worker Paul Elliott  
24 made an identical request. His request was granted. My request was denied, with minor exception.  
25 When discharged, I was not paid for certain vacation time, personal days and bonus days.

26 About mid-May 2000, co-worker Toni Feder and I were talking alone in the Physics Today art  
27 office. Benka approached us and told us that he noticed that we stopped talking when he showed up.



1 On May 23, 2000, I was in Rita Wehrenberg's office. (We worked together on articles that I  
2 edited.) She said that she was sorry, but she had shown Benka an article about my book in *The*  
3 *Chronicle of Higher Education*. She explained that on May 22, 2000, the article had been circulating  
4 among co-workers and she had been reading it in her office and laughing out loud, when Benka  
5 overheard her, entered her office, and asked what is so funny. She explained to me that she had no  
6 choice but to show him the article. I agreed and said it's not your fault. She told me that he took the  
7 article and stood over her and read the whole thing, and that he did not laugh or make any comment at  
8 all, but simply left her office. She said he created an awkward situation for her while he was in her  
9 office. Wehrenberg told me that the article she had been reading about my book was the one in the  
10 "Hot Type" column of the May 26, 2000, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. A copy of the  
11 article is attached hereto. The article says, among other things, that I advocate that salaried  
12 professionals form unions in their workplaces. The American Institute of Physics has a long history  
13 (dating back at least 19 years) of strongly opposing unionization by its employees.

14 On May 30, 2000, historian Spencer Weart, director of the American Institute of Physics  
15 Center for History of Physics, reviewed my book, made very positive comments, and selected my book  
16 for inclusion in the physics community section of the AIP Niels Bohr Library, a specialized collection  
17 with limited space. On May 30, 2000, I distributed Weart's review to all PT staff and management.

18 As of May 31, 2000, the date of my discharge, I had completed my entire annual review-period  
19 work quota in the first ten months of the period: I was two months ahead in my work.

20 Shortly before June 16, 2000, Physics Today told the claim examiner from the Maryland  
21 Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance, Tasha Owens, that I engaged in misconduct  
22 by admittedly using company time to work on a personal project over an extended period of time.  
23 Owens told me that at a hearing about my dismissal the company could not say what hours I spent  
24 writing the book because they did not know.

25 On August 29, 2000, former co-worker Toni Feder, who works at home, called me to tell me  
26 that Benka called a special staff meeting and told staff members not to give me any information about  
27 the magazine's hiring activities. Feder also told me that Benka also told staff members at that meeting  
28 not to discuss their performance reviews with anyone. She told me that she participated by conference

1 call. She has a practice of taking detailed notes of staff meetings. Jean Kumagai told me that Feder  
2 had reported to her, too, about the August 29, 2000, PT staff meeting.

3  
4 Throughout my 19 years at AIP, the company dictated the work standards for all of its  
5 employees. Physics Today employees who disputed these standards of work quantity and quality  
6 were nevertheless held to them. My co-workers Bertram Schwarzschild and Denis Cioffi, for  
7 example, disputed the work standards. The company nevertheless put Schwarzschild and Cioffi on  
8 probation for not coming close enough to meeting the standards. The company scrutinized my work  
9 closely against its standards, too, and never put me on probation. On the contrary, in every annual  
10 review of my job performance, management concluded ("overall rating") that I either met or  
11 exceeded the job requirements. In fact, during the years that I was writing the book, my supervisors  
12 gave me two promotions and 18 salary increases based explicitly on the quantity and quality of my  
13 work.

14 The main part of my job was editing feature articles, and my work was widely praised. The  
15 number of articles I edited per year was limited by Benka's ability to provide articles. Over the past  
16 few years I raised the issue of the chronic shortage of articles with Benka and other managers  
17 verbally countless times and in writing at least six times. Many of my co-workers were aware of the  
18 trouble I had getting work from Benka. Sometimes the only way I could get work was to ask co-  
19 workers if they would give me work that had been assigned to them.

20 Co-worker Bertram Schwarzschild's employment at Physics Today paralleled mine in  
21 starting date, job title, and salary. On June 9, 2000, Schwarzschild called me from his Physics  
22 Today office, and on December 28, 2000, I called him at his Physics Today office. During the  
23 ensuing conversations, Schwarzschild told me that management expects him to complete a certain  
24 amount of work and does not make an issue of how many hours he puts in to do it or whether he

1 does it in the office or elsewhere. Management allowed employees in my job category to pretty  
2 much set our own hours. For example, my co-worker Paul Elliott often began work after 4 p.m.

3       Schwarzschild said that management sees performance reviews as an opportunity to ask,  
4 "What more can you do for us?" He said that at about half of his performance reviews, he is told to  
5 "do more." Schwarzschild also said that management was trying to get him to commit himself to do  
6 more work than he could guarantee that he could do even though management counts his short  
7 "picture caption" stories as "big-ticket items." Those stories take him only one to a few days to  
8 complete. He told me that management's work expectations are often unreasonably high and that  
9 the amount of work he is expected to do is often the subject of dispute during his annual  
10 performance reviews.

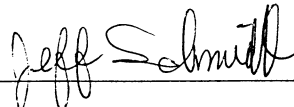
11       Schwarzschild reminded me that he disagrees "strongly" with my political views as  
12 expressed in my book and elsewhere. However, he told me that my use of office time was  
13 consistent with what management allows and with the office culture that management maintains.  
14 He told me that the amount of break time he takes is much greater than the two 15-minute breaks  
15 specified in the employee handbook. He has always done this openly, and it is well known in the  
16 workplace, by both co-workers and managers.

17       Elaborating, Schwarzschild told me that he and other Physics Today employees spend a lot  
18 of time on personal activities such as engaging in personal conversations in their offices, at the  
19 water cooler, and at the coffee maker, taking long lunch breaks, playing computer solitaire, using  
20 the Internet (for everything from locating old school chums to studying dog breeds to researching  
21 opera), exchanging personal e-mail, making personal telephone calls, running personal errands and  
22 so on. I and others observed him do these things as well as debate topics at length with co-workers,  
23 rehearse lines for plays in which he was to appear, and engage in other non-work activities. I and  
24 co-workers have been present when managers, including Benka and Nanna, observed him do many

1 of these things. Schwarzschild noted that I did not do these things and that I had a reputation for not  
2 doing them. He said that by his estimate, based on working with me and observing me for 19 years,  
3 I put in as many hours on my work for the magazine as did he and my coworkers.

4 Schwarzschild told me that his supervisor, Benka, often sees him and others pursuing non-  
5 work activities in the office and raises no objection at the time or later. Schwarzschild told me that  
6 at one time, during my period of employment, he started writing a novel at the office (but got stuck  
7 after the first few pages). He told me that at the time he was "quite open" about his personal-writing  
8 intentions with both co-workers and managers, including Benka. He said that he openly joked, in  
9 front of co-workers and managers alike, that he kept the file on his office computer "hidden" under  
10 the name "Nakamura," because that looked like a typical file name for a Physics Today article. He  
11 said that the file is still on his office computer, under that name. He said that neither Benka nor any  
12 other manager objected to his personal writing efforts or other personal use of office time. Nor has  
13 his open and liberal personal use of office time prompted managers to revisit their workload  
14 disputes with him and assert that such use of office time proves that he could or should do more  
15 work for the company or that he is cheating the company.

I have read this statement consisting of 12 pages, including this page. I fully understand its contents, and I certify that it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Schmidt

Subscribed and Sworn To Before me at  
Washington, DC  
This 4th day of January 2001

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Agent,  
National Labor Relations Board

# Hot Type

**STEAL THIS BOOK:** Jeff Schmidt did. "This book is stolen," the *Physics Today* magazine editor declares at the beginning of his new work, which he wrote on the job when his bosses weren't looking. "Written on stolen time, that is."

Mr. Schmidt acknowledges that at first glance, his book could also be seen as an exercise in bait-and-switch. With the title, *Disciplined Minds*, in bold letters on the spine, and the category "Careers" stamped on the back cover, the book will no doubt attract the attention of hard-working professionals eager for an edge over their competitors—we mean, colleagues.

But Mr. Schmidt's subtitle—*A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals and the Soul-Battering System That Shapes Their Lives*—tells a different tale.

He envisions the readers of *Disciplined Minds* (Rowman & Littlefield) not as ladder-climbing careerists, but as "dissatisfied professionals and disillusioned graduate students—the majority."

Maybe you can identify. Mr. Schmidt believes that most people enter the work world or graduate school with the belief that their labor will be of social value. More often, they find that it's of only economic value—and not primarily to them. The hierarchies of professionalism leave them alone on their ladders, afraid to make a change.

If that sounds bleak, he has the solution. After examining the worlds of work and education with an eye for the political, he concludes with "Now or Never," a 33-point manifesto for changing the world, or at least your office.

It's not rocket science, says Mr. Schmidt, who earned his Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine. Form a union, fight elitism, and "undermine management's information advantage."

Sound like hard work? You're already doing it. For laborers in academe, Mr. Schmidt recommends reading "the weekly intelligence report for university bosses," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

—D. W. MILLER AND JEFF SHARLET